

Roman regimental brewery

MILITARY units in the Roman Empire appear to have run their own regimental breweries, according to new evidence from archaeological excavations near Hadrian's Wall. One of a large collection of wooden writing tablets found at Vindolanda Roman fort in Northumberland reveals that troops were sent by their officers to work in what seems to have been an army-run bakery, as well as the regimental bakery, clay pits, lime kilns, bath house and cobbler's workshop. At least eight soldiers ran the regimental brewery and supplied six gallons of beer a day to the commanding officer's household and presumably large quantities to the troops.

Another tablet reveals that at least 5 per cent of soldiers were suffering from conjunctivitis. This medical detail is contained in a copy of a military report sent from Vindolanda to the provincial

governor in London. Known as a *pridianum* and written on a 1.5 millimetre thin sheet of oak, it is the only document of its sort found in Western Europe. So far this year, a team under Robin Birley, archaeologist with the Vindolanda Trust, has unearthed 165 writing tablets, and since the current excavations began four years ago 1,100 tablets have been found. The texts date from 85-120 AD, just before the construction of Hadrian's Wall.

Perhaps the most entertaining tablet unearthed is one presumably written by a child, probably one of the sons of Flavius Cerialis, prefect of the 9th cohort of Batavians - troops from what is now Holland. Written in capitals, rather than joined-up writing, it is an inaccurately reproduced excerpt from Book Nine of Virgil's *Aeneid*, under which is written, in joined-up writing, *segnis*

(sloppy) - presumably the opinion of the child's tutor.



Texts in more than 600 different hands have been found, indicating the high degree of literacy in the Roman army. Slaves at the fort also appear to have been literate.

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Sentence structure

A Complete the sentences, choosing from the words in brackets, then refer to the text.

- Military units in the Roman Empire appear to have run their own regimental breweries, [by/ according to] new evidence from archaeological excavations near Hadrian's Wall. (ll. 1-7)
- One of a large collection of wooden writing tablets [found/was found] at Vindolanda Roman fort in Northumberland reveals that troops were sent by their officers to work in [what/ which] seems to have been an army-run brewery, [also/as well as] the regimental bakery. (ll. 7-15)
- Texts in more than 600 different hands have been found, [indicated/indicating] the high degree of literacy in the Roman army. (ll. 59-62)

B Join these sentences using the suggestions in brackets and making any necessary changes. Then check against the text.

- So far this year, a team under Robin Birley has unearthed 165 writing tablets. He is an archaeologist with the Vindolanda Trust. The current excavations began four years ago. 1,100 tablets have been found. (ll. 33-40) [commas, and since]

- Perhaps the most entertaining tablet unearthed is one presumably written by a child. He was probably one of the sons of Flavius Cerialis. He was prefect of the 9th cohort of Batavians. They were troops from what is now Holland. (ll. 44-50) [commas, dash]

Grammar points

- C** Supply *a/an, the* or zero (–) where necessary in this paragraph, then refer to the text. (Il. 1–22)
Give a reason or reasons beside each choice.

¹ military units in
² Roman Empire appear to have run their
 own regimental breweries, according to ³ new evidence
 from archaeological excavations near ⁴ Hadrian's Wall. One of
⁵ large collection of
⁶ wooden writing tablets found at
⁷ Vindolanda Roman fort in
⁸ Northumberland reveals that
⁹ troops were sent by their officers to work
 in what seems to have been ¹⁰ army-run brewery, as well as
¹¹ regimental bakery, clay pits, lime kilns, bath house
 and cobbler's workshop. At least eight soldiers ran ¹²
 regimental brewery and supplied six gallons of ¹³ beer
¹⁴ day to
¹⁵ commanding officer's household and presumably large
 quantities to ¹⁶ troops.

- D** We have to say: ... 5 per cent of soldiers **were suffering from conjunctivitis**. (Il. 24–25)
 Why can't we say: ... 5 per cent of soldiers ***were suffering conjunctivitis from***?

Supply the missing prepositions.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 I often suffer <i>from</i> a bad back. | 11 I insist knowing what happened. |
| 2 What time did you arrive Bangkok? | 12 I read it in the papers. |
| 3 I must apologize my mistake. | 13 Success is something you dream |
| 4 I've borrowed some money the bank. | 14 She identified her mother. |
| 5 You can rely me. | 15 I can't deal this problem. |
| 6 He confessed everything in the end. | 16 This article refers you. |
| 7 I advise you going to law. | 17 Who's going to pay all this? |
| 8 My hands smell soap. | 18 He's failed his efforts to find her. |
| 9 What's become old Mrs Harris? | 19 They all laughed me. |
| 10 He quarrels everybody. | 20 How dare you interfere my work. |

- E** Supply the right forms and tenses of the verbs in brackets, then refer to the text. (Il. 23–48)
 In each case, give your reason for the tense you have chosen.

Another tablet reveals that at least 5 per cent of soldiers
¹(*suffer*) from conjunctivitis.
 This medical detail ²(*contain*) in a copy of a military
 report sent from Vindolanda to the provincial governor in London.
 Known as a *pridianum* and written on a 1.5 millimetre
 thin sheet of oak, it ³(*be*) the only document
 of its sort found in Western Europe. So far this year,
 a team under Robin Birley, archaeologist with the Vindolanda Trust,
⁴(*unearth*) 165 writing tablets, and
 since the current excavations ⁵(*begin*) four years ago
 1,100 tablets ⁶(*find*)
 The texts ⁷(*date*) from 85–120 AD,
 just before the construction of Hadrian's Wall. Perhaps the most
 entertaining tablet unearthed ⁸(*be*) one presumably
 written by a child, probably one of the sons of Flavius Cerialis.